

(Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### CORPORATE SCANDALS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, today's headlines, WorldCom Finds Accounting Fraud, \$3.8 billion, slight misstatement of their earnings. The stock dropped from \$64.50 down to a few pennies, and 17,000 people will lose their jobs, but the former CEO is living happily in his mansion on the millions which he looted, as are many of his cohorts. This is a pattern that is being repeated time and time again. It has gone on for far too long.

It started a year ago today with the energy scandals in the West, little more than a year ago today. We were told by the Republican majority this is market forces at work, you have not built enough plants, has nothing to do with market manipulation. Well, now we got the memo that, in fact, Enron was manipulating the markets, but even with those market manipulations they went bankrupt.

Their former CEO, Mr. Lay, and their former Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Fastow, have between them more than \$100 million while employees have lost their pensions and their jobs.

□ 1815

This seems to be a pattern, does it not? What is the response of the Republican majority? Well, we pretended to adopt pension reform, but we did not prohibit what Enron did to its employees happening at other corporations, and it looks like there is a whole heck of a lot of other corporations out there on the edge while the CEOs are living on the gravy here, and that was sort of the initial response.

Then we had another little scandal coming along here which was American corporations do not think they should pay taxes anymore. Stanley Works wants to move to Bermuda, set up the new Bermuda Triangle, avoid U.S. taxes on its U.S. earnings and its overseas earnings. Bank of America has done the same scam. The corporations are lined up from here to Sunday to do that.

What is the response on that side? Well, the Secretary of the Treasury says our tax laws are too complex, this is a rational response by these unpatriotic corporations who are ripping off the American people, taxpayers and their own employees, and the majority leader on that side says he endorses this practice that they should not pay taxes unlike working wage-earning Americans.

Then we had Global Crossing, the CEO, a couple hundred million bucks there, little accounting scandal; Enron, accounting scandal; Tyco, accounting scandal; now WorldCom. What have we

done about the accounting system? Well, we are going to let the market work, the Republicans said. We adopted some securities and accounting reforms here. They say let them police themselves. Of course we get Harvey Pitt, Harvey Pitt appointed by the President of the United States, George Bush, to be headed by the Securities and Exchange Commission. He is a former lawyer for the securities companies that are out defrauding the American people. He is going to be a real lap dog down there. So the response here is status quo, do not upset the boat.

So there seems to be a common trend here which is we are in a meltdown. American CEOs are discredited, American corporations are discredited, the stock market is crashing, hurting average Americans; and the response on that side of the aisle is do not do anything, let market forces work and, by the way, let the CEOs skate. Oh, yes, we did do one really important thing last week. We passed the permanent repeal of estate tax for people who have over \$5 million of assets to make sure that Ken Lay, Mr. Fastow, and all these others who have ripped off tens of millions of dollars from their employees will never pay any taxes on the money they stole. God forbid they should, because they are all major contributors.

Last week the Republicans held the largest fundraiser in the history of Washington, D.C., headlined by the wonderful pharmaceutical companies, but followed up by many of the other players whom I have mentioned here because their CEOs happen to be awash in cash, and they want to make sure they do not go to jail. So they are becoming more and more generous in their contributing.

This is the most outrageous scandal in the history of the United States. The largest restatement of earnings by a corporation, tens of thousands of employees losing their pensions, their jobs, millions of Americans losing their 401(k)s, their pensions; and the response on the Republican side of the aisle is nothing, because they are frozen in place by the fact that they are taking so much money from the people who have perpetrated these frauds. I hope that the American people demand and vote for some change next fall.

#### REACTION TO U.S. 9TH DISTRICT COURT DECISION CONCERNING THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KERNS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. JEFF MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFF MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, look what the courts have done now. Just when we think life after September 11 had gained some sense of normalcy, just after patriotism at a level not seen since World War II had permeated every segment of our society, a society under God, two liberal

judges in San Francisco have told this Nation at war that our Pledge of Allegiance is unconstitutional. Personally, Mr. Speaker, I am sickened. The Pledge is not a prayer. It is a declaration of being an American. It is the embodiment of everything we hold dear, the flag, the Republic, and one Nation under God.

I guess in a country where our constitutional safeguards have been taken to the extreme and have had to have nativity scenes removed from town squares and even silent prayers removed from high school football games, I should not be surprised. I suspect it is only a matter of time or a matter of finding the right lawyer who is seeking to make a name for himself to proclaim that the U.S. flag is unconstitutional and that by flying the flag someone may be offended by its semblance. We are forced to say happy holidays instead of Merry Christmas. We are forced to say *gesundheit* rather than God bless you. If a school teacher mentions Jesus during a lesson on history, that teacher faces disciplinary action.

Mr. Speaker, it is time we put our foot down as a body, a representative body of this country and respond to this outrageous decision and proclaim that these United States are united against terrorism, united against this decision, and united under God.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS UNDER MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last week the Committee on Energy and Commerce spent 3 long days and one very long night marking up a piece of legislation that is supposed to provide seniors with a Medicare prescription drug benefit. I say "supposed to" because most Americans support putting prescription drugs under Medicare. I have a graph here that shows those who support or oppose rolling back the tax cut that Congress passed last year and using that money to provide a prescription drug benefit under Medicare for seniors. Supporting is 64 percent, opposing is 25 percent, and 6 percent do not think Medicare ought to have prescription drugs. This poll was done between March 28 and May 1 of this year.

So instead of having the huge tax cut that we passed last year before September 11 and extending them even after 9 years from now, the American people really want a prescription drug benefit for seniors before they want a tax cut.

What is frustrating is that if we had been able to pass even one single Democratic amendment during that markup, I think all those days and that night would have been well spent. Unfortunately, every effort we made to improve the bill, and there was so much to improve, was shot down on basically party line votes.